THE SECRET HISTORY OF PYTHAGORAS.

Translated from the

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OTRANTO in ITALY.

Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα Θεοὺς, νόμῳ ὡς διάκειται
Τιμᾷ. ——— Pyth. Carm. Aur.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

PREFACE.

THE Tranſlation of this venerable Piece of Antiquity is undertook upon a double Score; being deſigned as well to entertain the Curioſity of the Learned, as to ſupply the Defects of the Ignorant. If the original Language would have been more acceptable to the one, it would have been leſs intelligible to the other. I cannot, without uttering a Falſity, venture to affirm that ſo ſingular and valuable a Piece will be made Public, at leaſt as yet: And in the mean Time I ſhall flatter my ſelf, that this little Eſſay may contribute in ſome ſort or other to the

Diverſion, if not Inſtruction, of People in every Condition of Life.

If this is well received, the other Parts will make their Appearance at proper Diſtances of Time. I publiſh no more at preſent, becauſe I would not be thought to impoſe too much upon any one's Patience; as for loſing my own Labour, I am under no bad Apprehenſions about that; for the Reader cannot reject with a greater Diſdain, than I have tranſlated with Pleaſure, the Contents of this Book.

I ſhall ſay little by way of Apology for the Subject Matter of it, ſince it is not my Buſineſs to think it wants any, and the Nature of the Thing ſpeaks ſo amply for itſelf. That *Pythagoras*, who held the Tranſmigration of Souls, pretended to remember Things tranſacted in the Bodies which he had formerly animated, has been univerſally allowed. *Ovid* in the fifteenth Book of his *Metamorphoſes*, introduces him in

in a Lecture to his Diſciples, ſaying thus of himſelf:

Ipſe Ego (nam memini) Trojani tempore belli
Panthoides Euphorbus eram, &c.

and he proceeds to mention ſome Particulars which happened to him at that Time. Why therefore may he not as well be ſuppoſed to have recorded the great Variety of Incidents which he muſt have met with in the other Bodies which he inhabited? One would almoſt ſuſpect that *Ovid* had ſeen the following Memoirs, and taken his Hints from them; ſince he makes our Philoſophers, ſpeaking of the Depravity of Mankind, ſay

———*Ipſos*
Inſcripſere Deos ſceleri, Numenque ſupernum
Cæde laboriferi credunt gaudere juvenci.

But there is no Room to queſtion it, when preſently after we find he puts theſe Words into his Mouth;

O Genus

O Genus attonitum gelidæ formidine mortis!
Quid Styga, quid tenebras, quid nomina vana
Materiem Vatum? [*timetis,*

So little Reaſon is there for being ſurprized at the Revival of this Hiſtory now, that we might be reckoned ſtrangely inſipid, if we had not concluded there had once been ſuch a Thing extant, though it had utterly periſhed among the Ruins of Time.

The *Greek* Sentence which I have put in the Title-Page for a Motto, and which is *Pythagoras* his own, being the Beginning of his Golden Verſes, ſeems to be a Precept which he would have us think he had been taught in the Perſon of *Æthalides*; for it is in *Engliſh*,

Worſhip the immortal Gods as by Law eſtabliſh'd.

Human Laws reſpecting altogether the external Behaviour and Deportment, and not being capable in their Nature of affecting the Heart; this Philoſopher takes Occaſion

Occaſion more than once to excite us to an Obſervance of them. The Laws of God, which alſo regard the inward Regulation of the Mind, and are not of a Quality to fall under the Cognizance of human Judges, he refers to the Arbritation of Reaſon; and queſtions not, if we are determined by that, but they will meet with a ready Compliance.

If any one, to ſhew his Skill in Criticiſm, ſhould remark that this Secret Hiſtory, becauſe of the Inaccuracy and Uncertainty of its Style, does not ſeem to have been compiled by ſo learned a Philoſopher: I have one Thing to obſerve to him, which ought in Reaſon to out-ballance all the Occaſions for Cavil upon that Account; he is not to look upon this as a regular Performance, but as what undoubtedly it was, Minutes taken in Short-Hand by ſome Sympoſiac or Diſciple, and filled up afterwards, upon a leiſurely Recollection.

Beſides, as the ſhortneſs of a Proſpect is ſometimes thought to be a Diſadvantage to it, ſo poſſibly this may be the leſs pleaſing upon the ſame Account. Therefore I am to acquaint the Reader, that the whole Viſta will be opened by Degrees, which I hope will be the more ſurprizing: Brown Shades, and flowry Meadows, the winding Stream, and the old Ruins, the diſtant Woods gilded with Sunſhine, and beyond all, the blueiſh Mountains, will ſucceſſively appear. I have given no more here than what may be ſeen without ſtraining the Sight, or aſcending an Eminence; it is not deſigned to take off the Eye from Things of greater Conſequence, but may be peruſed at the Repaſt of the Tea-Table, or in a Coffee-Houſe Vacation.

INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

SINCE the Learned are already ſufficiently apprized, by their reſpective Correſpondents from *Italy*, of the great Treaſure of Curioſities which has been lately diſcover'd there in the Garden of an ancient Palace, which ſtands upon the Ruins of the old Town of *Croton*, I ſhall detain the Reader no longer with a particular Account of that Matter, than what is juſt neceſſary to illuſtrate the Subject I am going to communicate.

In a Part of the Wilderneſs belonging to the Gardens of a decay'd Palace of a certain Cardinal, near *Otranto*, there has been, for ſome Generations paſt, a large Caſcade almoſt naturally form'd, which falls down the Sides of a broken Rock into a Baſon of no ſmall Circumference; in which, for Want of due Inſpection and Repair, (the

Cardinal reſiding moſtly at another Palace ſituated more conveniently in Reſpect to its Diſtance from *Rome*) there has been, long ſince, a Rupture, or Chaſm on one Side near the Bottom; at which the Water having, for ſome Time, emptied itſelf, did, at laſt, ſo dilute and waſh away the concrete Particles of which the Cement conſiſted, which held the Stones of the Foundation together, that the whole Fabrick ſunk in one Night.

The Depth of this Sinking made thoſe who ſaw it the next Day, apprehend it to have been the Effects of an Earthquake; till, being ſearched into not long after, by ſome Workmen who were ſet to repair it, it was diſcovered to be cauſed by the falling in of an Arch, over which the Baſon was built. This Arch, by the Fragments of it, appear'd to have been deſigned for the Roof or Covering of ſome Grotto; and, from the Pieces of Carving, ſtill remaining upon it, ſome of the more curious Spectators concluded it to be antique.

Upon clearing the Place of its Rubbiſh, they were ſoon, to their great Satisfaction, con-

confirmed in their Opinion. For the whole was found to be a handſome large Room, near upon ſquare, about forty Foot over each way, and as many in Height. The Door or Entrance near thirty Foot high, with a Window on each ſide it, which were all the Lights it had, made this Front of the Building look very ſpacious and grand; which yet altogether was plain, and of the *Doric* Order. Within were ſeveral Niches properly diſpoſed, each containing a very fair Buſt of *Parian* Marble, and the Pedeſtal of *Egyptian*. I am told that ſeveral Medals were dug up under the Pavement, which conſiſted of very thick hard red Tiles, about eight Inches ſquare. An Account of all which, and many other Antiquities equally entertaining, will ſoon be publiſhed in a Diſcourſe or Treatiſe purpoſely written by the Learned *Signor Florentini*, the Pope's Librarian; who was ſent thither by his Holineſs, at the Requeſt of the Cardinal, with a ſpecial Commiſſion to take the Care and Cognizance of them.

Therefore, to come to our preſent Purpoſe, I muſt inform the World, that a

hopeful young Gentleman, Son to a moſt ingenious and obliging Friend of mine, happening in the Courſe of his Travels to lye at an Inn in the Neighbourhood of this Place, the third Night after the Diſcovery was made, ſtay'd there five Days; hoping, by indefatigable Induſtry and Application, to make himſelf Maſter of ſome little Piece of theſe Antiquities; having a good Reliſh and Judgment for Things of that Kind.

But Orders being ſent from *Rome*, from the Cardinal, that a Guard ſhould be ſet near the Place, and all Perſons whatever ſtrictly kept off from approaching it, he had but a faint Proſpect of accompliſhing his Wiſhes: Till one Evening, as he was walking out after Sun-ſet, he met a poor Labourer with a Spade and Mattock on his Shoulder, returning from his Work. The young Gentleman, letting ſlip no Opportunity of exerciſing himſelf in the *Italian* Tongue, which the ordinary Peaſant there (quite contrary to what happens in moſt other Countries) ſpeaks as properly as the beſt bred Courtier at *Rome*, took occaſion

caſion to enter upon Diſcourſe with him; and ſoon with a ſecret Pleaſure found, that the Converſation he held was with one of thoſe who were employed in clearing away the Rubbiſh of the Ruins in the Cardinal's Garden.

Fired with freſh Expectations upon ſo welcome an Interview, he firſt warily ſounded the poor Man's Capacity, hoping he might find him one of thoſe experienced Pioneers, who knew how to turn ſuch ſort of Work in ſome Meaſure to their own Advantage; and from whom, moſt of the late-found Medals and Antiquities which have been brought from *Italy*, have, by clandeſtine Practices, been obtained. In fine, this Ruſtic, as ſimple as he appeared, was one of theſe; and having taken his Opportunity to conceal ſomething which he thought might be of Value, he afterwards, under Pretence of going to drink at a little Fountain, which guſhed out of a Lyon's Head, fixed in the Garden Wall, threw his Prize unſeen into an adjoining Meadow; from whence he had been to fetch it juſt as the young Traveller met him.

Theſe

Theſe two had very luckily happened upon each other, being the propereſt Perſons they could mutally communicate their Deſigns to: For whenever any curious Thing of Value or Antiquity is procured by any Stranger, unleſs he uſes the utmoſt Precaution in conveying it out of the Country, he is ſure to have it ſeized and taken from him; nay, though he has paid ever ſo fair a Price for it, and purchaſed it of the rightful Proprietor.

To be ſhort; the poor Peaſant having a juſt Confidence in the young Gentleman, without Heſitation drew out from under his Cloaths a Cylinder of about a Foot long, and five Inches Diameter. It was caked over with a rough Caſe of Earth and Ruſt intermingled; and by its Lightneſs ſeemed to be hollow; which attempting with a Knife, they were ſoon certified of; for they found it very thin, and made ſhift to raiſe up, and ſeparate one End, as one would open the Head of an Oyſter-Barrel. There appeared to be nothing in it but a Roll of Parchment or Vellum, curiouſly rolled

rolled round a ſmall Stick of black Ebony, at each End of which was a little Boſs of white Cornelian. Our young Virtuoſo, without ſtaying to examine the Contents, made it his own for five Crowns, and deferred the Peruſal of it to a more proper Time and Place.

This Volume, ſince the young Gentleman's Return, by the very obliging and communicative Temper of his Father, is now in my Hands; and I have a Permiſſion from both to publiſh ſuch an Account of it as I ſhall think proper; which now the Reader may prepare himſelf for, and is as follows.

The Writing is in the *Greek* Tongue, of an ancient fair Character; but the Ink ſo decayed and faded by Time, that at preſent it is barely legible, and no more. I have tranſcribed it with the utmoſt Care and Exactneſs; and can aver, that I ſolemnly believe I have not omitted or miſtaken one Letter.

On

On the outſide of the Roll was written *Codex Pompilianus*; meaning, that the Book had belong'd to *Numa Pompilius*, the ſecond King of *Rome*, which is moſt probable; or to ſome other *Roman* of that Name. On the inſide was the Title, Τὰ Πυθαγόρᾳ τῆ της Σοφίας φίλᾳ ἀπόῤῥητα, The ſecret Hiſtory of *Pythagoras* the Philoſopher: As indeed it has been hitherto. For though Men of Learning have all along been acquainted with that great Man's Notions of the Tranſmigration of the Soul, which he uſed to aſſert from his own particular Experience; profeſſing that *his* had belonged firſt of all to the Body of *Æthalides*, then to thoſe of *Euphorbus*, *Hermotimus*, and *Pyrrhus* a poor Fiſherman of *Delos*, ſucceſſively; yet they never were informed ſufficiently of ſuch co-temporary Circumſtances and Parts of Hiſtory, as the Mind of one ſo obſervant upon all remarkable Paſſages muſt needs have collected, in the different Bodies or Stages of Life in which it reſided. Theſe are the Contents of this *Pompilian* Volume; which ſeems to have been in the keeping of ſome noble

noble Inhabitant of *Croton*; though it is not impoſſible but *Numa* himſelf might have had a Houſe there. How long it has been thus loſt to the World, or whether indeed it were ever publickly known to it, cannot, I think, eaſily be determined. It was found under the Pavement, as if deſignedly laid there; either before the Building was erected, or to be concealed upon ſome Emergency which happened after. Poſſibly upon that Irruption which the *Gauls* made into *Italy*, under their King *Brennus*, when they over-ran all before them, and plundered even *Rome* it ſelf. For there being ſcarce any thing extant of the *Romans* till after that Time, in which we could expect any mention of *Pythagoras*'s Works, makes it not unlikely that this was the only Book of that kind in being; and by the unhappy Care of its Profeſſor, who might fall in that Time of Calamity, came to be buried in ſo long an Obſcurity.

The Uſe I ſhall put it to at preſent, till the preſent Proprietor reſolves to make the Original public, is to communicate to the

World the Contents of it in a Tranſlation into our own Tongue; which I intend to ſerve up, to keep the Appetites of my Readers from being cloyed, in moderate Parcels; that the Whole may laſt the longer, and that proper Portions of it may be ſet before them from time to time as their Stomachs may ſeem to call for it.

MEMOIR I.

The Hiſtory of ÆTHALIDES.

MY Mother's Name was *Melidora*; ſhe lived in the Suburbs of *Paphos*, in the Iſland of *Cyprus*; and procured herſelf an honeſt unenvied Livelihood, by furniſhing ſeveral of its Inhabitants with Milk, Honey, and all Sorts of delicious Fruits as the Seaſon required. She rented a little Farm and Garden of a Merchant in the City, as her Mother had done before her; from whence ſhe provided many Conveniences for the Citizens, a comfortable Maintenance for herſelf, and a handſome Education for me. For ſhe ſent me to the principal School in the Town; where I was inſtructed among the Children of People of the firſt Rank, in all the Sciences that are proper

to adorn a Man, and make him uſeful to his Country.

As my Age came on, my Love of Knowlege increaſed; and notwithſtanding the great Care of my Maſter, and tender Fondneſs of my Mother, who were daily feeding my Mind with all the Notions that were adapted to cheriſh and improve it, I continually gave Inſtances of ſo inquiſitive a Temper, as rather afforded Pleaſure than Trouble to thoſe about me.

One Day, perceiving I was without a Father, a Happineſs I could not ſee, without repining, in ſome of my Equals, I enquired of my Mother concerning it, with more than uſual Importunity. Young as I was, I could not help obſerving the ſudden Bluſh which overſpread her beautiful Neck and Face at this Queſtion. She was not then above One and Twenty; and as I have ſince heard from many Reports, did not yield to the faireſt Woman in that City for the Charms of her Perſon. She ſtrained me in her Arms with much Rapture, and after having overwhelm'd me with

with a thouſand Kiſſes, yes, my deareſt *Æthalides* (ſays ſhe) I will tell you; and that which has been the Cauſe of your preſent Being, and will be the Means of your future Welfare, ſhall no longer be kept ſecret from you.

Know then, my deareſt Child, purſued ſhe, that I was ſcarce thirteen Years old, when in the Evening of a hot Summer's Day, I chanced to fall aſleep under the Hedge of Roſes, which grows on the ſide of the little Rivulet, which runs through our Garden. My Mother not being yet returned from the Town, whither her Buſineſs had carried her, and the Servants employed in ſome more remote Part of the Garden, I lay thus till the Duſk of the Night was far advanc'd. The Freſhneſs of the cool Breezes, and the Stillneſs of the Place, which was rendered more agreeable by the warbling Notes of correſponding Nightingales, contributed ſo irreſiſtibly to tie down my Senſes with the ſilken Cords of *Morpheus*, that I did not awake before I found my ſelf irrecoverably within the Arms and Power of a moſt beau-

beautiful young Man. I would have employed my Strength in Reſiſtance, but the ſudden Surprize had deprived me of it; I would have raiſed my Voice for Help, but Fear had diſarmed my Tongue: And the Attention, which I could not avoid giving to an Accident ſo new to me, conſpired to complete my Undoing. For whether Love had ſo early begun to find the way to my Heart, or whether it was only a Childiſh Prelude to it, the Features of this Perſon ſo reſembled thoſe of a handſome Youth of *Paphos*, whom I had eagerly gazed at the Day before, when he came to our Houſe (as he frequently did) to buy Fruits, that, notwithſtanding the Anguiſh I ought to have felt upon ſuch an Occaſion, by that fatal Prepoſſeſſion of my Fancy, I was all over melted into Tenderneſs. There was nothing to reſtrain him from indulging the Warmth of his Paſſion to the laſt Degree of Deſire, but the eternal and unalterable Rules of Nature; which at length, after repeated Inſtances of his firſt Provocation, conſented to free me from his Embraces. By this time my Senſes, having re-aſſembled themſelves

ſelves to condole with me upon this Violation of my Honour, plunged me into an inexpreſſible Sorrow. I lay ſtill on the Ground; and I queſtion whether my Grief would ever have ſuffered me to riſe, if the charming Raviſher had not gently lifted me up.

After having folded me in his Arms with a forcible Tranſport, he addreſſed himſelf thus to me, in the ſweeteſt Accents that ever my Ears were bleſſed with-al. "Farewell, my lovely *Melidora*, and "to calm all your Troubles, remember "that the Son of *Jove* was the Author of "them. Yes, moſt amiable Nymph, it "is *Hermes*, who has this Night improved "his Immortality in your Fruition; who "has aſſumed the Perſon of *Neanthus*, "the Son of *Chryſander*, to gain the eaſier "Admittance to your Heart; and in his "Shape will continue to perform the kind "Offices due to you and your Offſpring "all the Days of your Lives.". He had ſcarce ſaid theſe Words, when the Voices of the Servants, who had been ſearching for me all over the Garden, reached our Ears; upon which the God your Father, un-

unwilling to make any Diſcovery to my Prejudice, flew to the little Wicket in the Wall, and unlocked it with as much Dexterity, as if he had had the real Keys. And that *Neanthus*, our Landlord the Merchant's Son, who is ſo fond of you, and whoſe Preſence ſo often bleſſes this Roof, is indeed nothing leſs than what he ſeems to be, but the artful Son of the Thunderer, who retains the Form of that Son of *Chryſander*, which was long ſince ſhipwrecked near the Iſland of *Rhodes*, that he may the more favourably continue to his helpleſs Dependants the Protection, which by his Means is become ſo neceſſary to them.

She finiſhed her Diſcourſe with giving me a Charge of the ſtricteſt Secrecy, which for my Part I kept inviolably; but the whimſical Conditions of my half Immortality after Death being publiſhed to the World, gave undoubted Tokens of my heavenly Extraction. If the Happineſs of being let into ſuch a Secret had made the Head of giddy Childhood ſwim with Vanity, it would not have been unpardonable; but it had not that Effect upon me. Indeed

deed it darted a moſt exquiſite Pleaſure into my Heart, and elevated all my Senſes with gentle Ebulitions of Joy. When I reflected upon my Birth, it ſwelled my Mind with an Ambition to be worthy of it, without infuſing into me the leaſt Tincture of Pride. I had been early inſtructed in the Principles of Religion and Morality; and *Eleutherius* my Maſter, that I might have a juſt Notion of the Gods, had taken care firſt to make me underſtand their Attributes, that I might not entertain any abſurd or contradictory Opinions concerning their Nature.

All the Inhabitants of Foreign Nations (ſays he) and the Generality of our own People are educated in falſe Principles of Religion, the better to ſerve the Intereſts and Deſigns of cheating Prieſts, who are ſo well ſkilled in theſe kind of Artifices, that they know no Baſis ſo proper to build their Tyranny upon, as an eſtabliſhed Ignorance. The better to ſupport and cheriſh this, they provide that Mankind ſhould be trained up from their early Childhood,

when, like Wax, they are ſofteſt and fitteſt to take Impreſſions, in ſuch wrong miſtaken Notions of the Deity, as may be moſt ſubſervient to their Purpoſes? This fine Scheme takes place before they can well ſpeak, and they are taught what they muſt believe of the Gods, before they are capable of knowing them or any thing elſe. All the Ideas they are made to conceive of them are ſuch as belong to Men only; that they are paſſionate, revengeful, partial, jealous, vain-glorious, reſolving, repenting, miſtaken, that they are circumſcribed in their Actions by Time and Place, ſometimes pleaſed, and ſometimes diſpleaſed; whereas in Truth, my deareſt Child, there is one only real and very God, who ordained all Things, and on whom all Things depend; and the ſeveral Gods and Goddeſſes, with ſo many ſeveral Names which the Vulgar are taught to worſhip, are indeed no more than ſo many ſeveral Attributes and Qualities of this true God.

With

With him, my *Æthalides*, I muſt make you well acquainted: To which, there is no more requiſite, than that you ſhould form a right Conception of his Attributes. Take care that theſe may be always ſuch as are conſiſtent with, and agreeable to, the Nature of him that made the Univerſe, and keeps it in ſo continued an Order. Conſider, that to do this, he muſt be All-wiſe, and All-powerful, Infinite, Immutable and Eternal; and ſo abſolutely Perfect in all Repects, that neither his Wiſdom nor his Power, his Goodneſs nor his Happineſs, are capable of any Addition or Diminution.

When you are convinced of this, (as your Reaſon will readily convince you of it) you can never ſuffer yourſelf to think, with the Vulgar, that a Deity abſolutely perfect is liable to the Paſſions and Imperfections of us poor Mortals. Can you ſuppoſe him angry, or grieved, or jealous, without implying a Diminution of his

Happineſs? Can you conceive *Him* upon any account partial, who is infinitely juſt? Can a Being, All-wiſe, and Good, without great Abſurdity, be repreſented Vainglorious, making Reſolutions, and repenting of them, and ſometimes miſtaken? Can He be All-powerful, and yet be imagined to want Time to complete his Work, and to fail in many of his Attempts? How groſs is the Idea of *His* being more in one part of Space than another, when compared with his Infinity? How wretchedly ſtupid, thoſe of *His* being paſſionate and revengeful, when we reflect upon his Immutability and great Perfection?

Yet thus fooliſh, thus abſurd, thus ignorantly profane is the poor deluded Multitude by the Impoſitions of miſrepreſenting Prieſts. The Men of this Profeſſion make the credulous People believe that they converſe with the Gods with much Familiarity, and have a very good Intereſt with, and Influence over, them: That they can prevail with them to do *this*, or to deſiſt from *that*,

that, juſt as they pleaſe; and to ſend Good or Evil among Mankind, according as they ſhall repreſent Matters to them. When they think themſelves not treated with ſufficient Reſpect, they ſay, that the Gods are angry, and threaten the World with nothing leſs than Plague or Famine to revenge the Affront.

God, my deareſt *Æthalides*, is indeed the Author of all Things, ſince nothing can be done without him; and conſequently Plagues and Famines happen as he appoints: But I think the ſhallow Knowlege of Man has no Warrant to determine, whether they are ſent as Judgments or not. The World was always too full of Wickedneſs not to deſerve Puniſhment: But thinkeſt thou, *Æthalides*, that the raging Peſtilence which laſt Year ſwept away almoſt the whole City of *Athens*, fell upon the moſt wicked Spot of all the Earth; or that the Gods deſigned to ſhew their Juſtice, when *Ariſtus*, *Philaretes* and *Polimedon* fell undiſtinguiſhed in the Infection, and *Laoleſtes*,

oleſtes, *Autophilus* and *Miſander* eſcaped? No certainly: For *Athens* yielded to no City in the World for Politeneſs and Religion; and *Ariſtus*, *Philaretes* and *Polimedon* were as much eſteem'd for their exalted Virtues, as *Laoleſtes*, *Artophilus* and *Miſander* were deteſtable for their flagitious Enormities.

When therefore we ſee Men of ſuch different Characters, whoſe Actions were as oppoſite as Light and Darkneſs, ſhot promiſcuouſly with the Arrows of Death, tho' we can't deny it to be the Hand of God, it is ſhocking to call it his Vengeance, his Reſentment, his Anger, his Wrath, his Fury, and thoſe Expreſſions which give us ſuch Ideas of his being peeviſh and implacable. How is it poſſible to think worthily and truly of Him who is infinitely Good, without always repreſenting Him to our Minds as full of Love, Benevolence, Sweetneſs, Candour and Compaſſion?

Have we liv'd in a Purſuit of Virtue and honourable Courſes; and do we expect to be

be admitted into *Elyſium* after Death? If we do, then how can we be inſenſible of the great Good-will of *Jove*, who ſends his Meſſenger Death to bid us leave off Labour and go to Reſt? How very benevolent and compaſſionate is he to the Survivors, when he is ſo kind as to take off the Injurious and the Oppreſſor, the lying Hypocrite and the crafty Knave? Nay, how very good to theſe Criminals themſelves, when by intercepting them in the midſt of their Villanies, he renders them capaple of a milder Sentence from the infernal Judges? O *Jove*, thy Love is continual and thy Goodneſs unbounded! If we do our hearty Endeavour to be good like Thee, and obey thoſe Precepts of Vitue which Thou haſt written in our Mind, we are ſure thou wilt not hurt us, but command the Gates of *Elyſium* to be open'd for our Reception; where we may be mingled with the Company of our virtuous honeſt Anceſtors, and enjoy eternal Peace and Pleaſure in thoſe Fields of Joy, and Groves of Delight: But if we act contrary

to

to that Senſe of Thee which our Reaſon dictates to us; 'tis not a Deluge of Water, or a parch'd ſunburn'd Earth, the momentary Alarms of Famine, Peſtilence, or the Sword, that we ought to fear, but an Eternity of Torments under the Hands of indefatigable Furies in Hell. Thou art immutable; and ſo far is the preſumptuous Prieſt from being able to change thy Decrees, which are founded upon infinite Juſtice, that it would be the higheſt Impiety to ſuppoſe Thy Nature capable of it: No: Thou art juſt and true in all thy Actions, and it is ſufficient that we know our Doom hereafter depends upon our Actions here, without thy being repreſented in Statues of Wood and Stone, with Arrows and Thunderbolts lifted up at our Heads, as if thou wert an angy and ill-natur'd God.

Wherefore, my *Æthalides*, (continued he) keep a ſtrict Guard over thy Mind, that thou conceiveſt not any Thought of the ſupreme Being, which is not agreeable to his Attributes; nor let the Examples of others,

others, who entertain ſuch ſtrange ridiculous Fancies about him, give any Bias to thy Judgment; for thou knoweſt how apt the Multitude is to run into and perſevere in a wrong Opinion. Do they not believe that the Sun, Moon and Stars are no bigger than they ſeem? that the bright Luminary of the Day falls into the Sea at Night, and riſes out of it in the Morning; and that he is carried in a Chariot round this dirty Spot on which we live? Are there not ſome ſuperſtitious Strangers among us, which inhabit ſomewhere near the Confines of *Aſſyria*, who boaſt that this luminous Orb once ſtopt in his full Career for ſome Hours, to anſwer the Deſign of a certain Mortal? Is not *Jove* himſelf wickedly ſuppos'd to have bid him lye ſtill for three Nights together, that he might have the longer time to revel in the Arms of *Alcmena*? Whereas Thou haſt been taught, that this Globe of Light is at too great a Diſtance from us to perform ſuch a Rotation in a thouſand million of Years; tho' it were to move as ſwift as the Arrows of *Hercules*. But the wicked

Prieſts, my *Æthalides*, invent theſe Fables, to ſupport their Dignity, and augment their Gains.

What God, thinkeſt Thou, muſt he be, who our Prieſts tell us is out of humour, and diſcontented without a Multitude of Offerings and Sacrifices? a Man of ſuch a Temper would be accounted covetous, and greedy, and unreaſonable. What Idea canſt thou have of a God who loves to regale his Noſe with roaſted Bullocks, and carbonaded Sheep and Goats, and Libations of rich Wine? a Man with an Appetite ſo continually diſpos'd would be accounted a Glutton. But what is the God that theſe Offerings are ſerv'd up to? Why perhaps a Piece of Wood, or Stone, or Braſs, or ſome ſuch Material; carv'd ſometimes in a very ridiculous Shape, like a Man, or a Woman, or Monſter with three Heads, as *Diana* is repreſented: They have Faces and Mouths, but can neither ſee nor eat; they have Hands and Feet, and yet ſometimes fall down, and are broken in pieces.

Who

Who therefore eats the roaſted Beef, and the broil'd Cutlets of Mutton; but the hungry voracious Prieſt? Who empties the ſmiling Goblet of its ſparkling Wine, but the thirſty tippling Prieſt? Who ſays the Gods are yet diſpleas'd, and require more Offerings? the artful Prieſt: raiſing Contributions to inhance his own Dignity, from the idle Superſtitions and groundleſs Fears of the giddy Multitude.

Theſe, my *Æthalides*, conſider as Men exerciſing a Trade, to which they are educated, and by which they muſt live. Take care that thou affront not their Perſons, nor openly ridicule their Imployment; for in ſo doing thou mayſt offend and provoke the State, which for politic Ends did firſt inſtitute, and for the ſame will continue to protect the Men of this Profeſſion. Thou mayſt laugh in private at all the Abſurdities which they make the People ſwallow, and at the vain Alarms by which they govern their Hopes and Fears: But beware how thou diſturb or meddle with them in pub-

lic; for they will echo their Reſentments againſt thee from Temple to Temple, like a Neſt of Hornets provok'd in the hollow Rock, and wound thy good Name with the Stings of poiſonous Language.

Yet let that Virtue, by which Thou art bound to ſerve thy Country, exhort thee to uſe the Power of thy Station, whatever it be, to check their Pride and controul their Ambition. Tho' they were originally deſign'd for Servants and Inſtruments of the Government, yet are they very inclinable to uſurp an Authority and Dominion of their own, and to tyrannize over the very Magiſtrate, who conſtitutes and appoints them. Therefore, be aſſur'd, it is the Intereſt of all honeſt Men, and Lovers of their Country, to keep down the aſpiring haughty Aims of theſe Cooks of State, theſe venerable Butchers; and never truſt them with any Power, but what they will readily acknowledge to be confer'd upon them by the Magiſtrate, in a limited Senſe, for the good of the Public.

With

With this View were the different Rituals and Modes of Worſhip firſt eſtabliſh'd in all the Nations and Cities round about us; each following that way which was moſt ſuitable to their Genius, and moſt conveniently adapted to correſpond with their Form of Government. Thus *Crete* thinking itſelf holy above all Lands for the Story of *Jupiter*'s being born, educated, and buried there, worſhips him chiefly; and looks down with Scorn and Contempt upon other Nations, as People deſtitute of equal Privileges, if not quite excluded from the divine Favour. But, *Æthalides*, canſt thou help ſmiling at their Superſtition, or doſt thou pity their Stupidity and Credulity? who can be made to believe that *Jove* was born as we Men are; and that he was brought thither to be educated privately, leſt his Father *Saturn* ſhould find him and eat him? Nay, they ſay too, that after he had liv'd his Term of Life out, he died and was buried there; and they think all thoſe very profane and wicked People, who will not believe this Nonſenſe, theſe Impoſſibilities.

It

It is probable, my *Æthalides*, there might have been ſuch a Man as *Jupiter*, who by ſome extraordinary Occurrences in his Life, ſince improv'd by fabulous Traditions, may appear a very extraordinary Perſon, and even an Object of Worſhip to a ſuperſtitious bigotted World; whoſe natural Fears are eaſily wrought upon by the Stratagems of Prieſts, eſpecially when they are countenanc'd and authoriz'd by the Magiſtrate. But to eſteem ſuch a one the great Creator and Arbiter of the Univerſe, (who muſt have exiſted, in the higheſt Perfection of every thing that is good, from all Eternity) is the Effect of Ignorance, Superſtition, and a blind Reliance upon old Wives Stories, and the cunning Management and Policy of Prieſts.

Who, but a moſt beſotted ſilly People, could ſuppoſe a Being of ſo exalted and refin'd a Nature, as the high God muſt be, capable of having carnal Copulation with mortal Women; and filling Heaven with his

his natural Offspring? One of theſe is the principal Object of religious Worſhip in the Iſland of *Delos*; another in the City of *Epheſus*. *Bacchus* is honour'd in Carouſels of Wine of his own Inſtitution at *Thebes*; and *Venus* the Goddeſs of Love and Beauty is ador'd here in *Cyprus*.

If I could enumerate all the Religions of the Earth with the Superſtitions that attend them, it would only be giving you a Detail of the ſeveral Follies of credulous Mankind, and the politick Contrivances of States and Governments. The bare mentioning of theſe may ſuffice to give you a Taſte of their Impoſtures; tho' however monſtrous and abſurd they appear, remember to ſpeak of them in public with a ſeeming Deference and Regard; and where it is expected you ſhould be particular in declaring for that ſort of Worſhip which you moſt approve, you ſhould, in Honour, diſtinguiſh and prefer that of your own Country.

Here

Here my Maſter concluded his Lecture upon Religion; which was the firſt I had heard from him upon that Subject, ſo plain and intelligible. He had often given me little Hints before; which either thro' my want of Capacity, or his deſigned Obſcurity in ſpeaking, made little or no Impreſſion upon me. But in this laſt Leſſon he had open'd his Mind with ſuch an Air of Tenderneſs and Concern, that every thing he ſaid had its due Weight, and ſunk deep into my Mind. The more I thought of it, the more I was convinc'd of the Truth of his Diſcourſe; and every Reflection which aroſe from it gave me a new and ſecret Pleaſure. The Complacence and Elevation of Spirit which I felt upon believing myſelf the Son of *Hermes* vaniſhed; or rather was extinguiſh'd, like a leſſer Light, by the bright Flame of Truth. A Knowledge, certain and demonſtrable, that the Generality of the World were wrong in this Reſpect; and I, young as I was, free from the Error, gave me a ſolid and durable Sa-

Satisfaction, which laſted the whole time of my Life. I was ſenſible that the Account my Mother had given me of my Birth, was either a plauſible Invention of her own to conceal a Truth not proper for her to mention, or that *Neanthus* had by this Trick firſt obtain'd, and ſince continu'd, to poſſeſs her Embraces. But whether ſhe herſelf had whiſper'd this Secret to a female Friend whom ſhe truſted, or the Fame of my Wit and Learning made my Countrymen conceive ſomething of me more than Mortal; they look'd upon me as the Son of that God ſome time before my Death, and after it beſtow'd Immortality and divine Honours upon me. However I kept *Melidora*'s Secret, and my own Senſe of it intirely to myſelf; I regarded *Neanthus* as my real Father, and lov'd him with a pious and grateful Affection; ſuch indeed as his Fondneſs and paternal Care of me juſtly claim'd. For his Father *Chryſander* dying ſoon after, and leaving him Heir to a good Eſtate and much Treaſure, he generouſly ſettled upon my Mother the Farm

and Gardens which ſhe rented, and made her a Preſent of two Talents of Gold.

But my Mind was ſo wholly engag'd in the Purſuit of Knowledge, that I found little Enjoyment out of the Company of my Maſter *Eleutherius*; and he was as much charm'd with my Parts, and ready Diſpoſition for Learning. The reſt of the Youths, my Schoolfellows, were ſo intent upon Sports and Plays, that they had the utmoſt Averſion for his dry Philoſophy (as they call'd it) and took advantage of all the Feſtivals and Times of Solemnity to abſent themſelves. Then it was that I had the moſt free and eaſy Acceſs to his Inſtructions, and heard him dictate without Reſerve. It would have been hard to determine whether the Maſter expounded, or the Scholar attended, with moſt Pleaſure.

One Day, when he had been holding a copious Diſcourſe upon our favourite Topic, Religion; and been expoſing, with his uſual Clearneſs and Strength of Reaſon, the great Inconveniences that had and might

proceed

proceed from Multitudes poſſeſs'd with Superſtition, and artfully inflam'd by wicked deſigning Prieſts, he confirm'd it with averring, that the more plain and natural any Religion was, the better it would be for the Public, and the more pleaſing to God. For (ſays he) if Mankind would but entertain thoſe juſt Notions of the Maker of the World, which their own Reaſon, his faithful Interpreter, would tell them, and reſolve not to be impoſed upon by Fables and Traditions; 'tis certain that the Religion flowing from thence muſt be acceptable to God, and beneficial to Mankind.

For firſt, What is more reaſonable and more conſiſtent with the Attributes and Honour of God, than to conclude that he expects nothing from his Creatures, but what he has given them Capacities to perform? If we think him to be a God of Juſtice, we are ſure he can require no more. When therefore the Prieſts, who declare themſelves to be the Keepers of his Myſteries and his Will, in one place pretend that he ought to be worſhip'd with Corn;

in another, that he expects Wine; in a third, Sheep and Oxen; and that here in our City he is delighted to ſee his Temple made a public Rendezvouz for lewd Women; who (if ſuch Devotion will produce it) bid fair indeed for eternal Happineſs, by taking care never to miſs the ſtated Times of Worſhip, and mortifying their Bodies by a continual Proſtitution: Which of theſe Preſcriptions are we to follow as the only right and infallible one? If we ask our Reaſon; none. If we ask the Prieſt; he will tell us, that which belongs to his particular God. And as many Religions as there are, ſo many hundred thouſand Prieſts will aver the ſame. What muſt be done then in this uncertain Labyrinth, where there are ſo many different Ways, and none appears to be (nor certainly is) the right one? Why let us have Recourſe to our Reaſon, that excellent Part of us, by which our Maker has diſtinguiſh'd us from the reſt of his Creatures, and try what Information we can get from thence. And that tells us, that, as God is the Perfection of all Good, we can never do better than when we

we endeavour to imitate and be like him: By doing as little Hurt, and as much Benefit as we can to our Fellow-Creatures: By keeping our Conſciences clear and innocent from evil Deſigns and Intentions, and forming new Reſolutions of proceeding in the Ways of Virtue. Is there any Abſurdity in this? Will this make God angry at any time? Nay rather, will it not always pleaſe him? If he were to ſpeak to us in the Voice of a Man, and tell us his Will in Words, would he make it any other than this? Could he indeed contrive any thing better? And yet how plain, how natural, how obvious to all Mankind is this?

Secondly, As this cannot but pleaſe God, ſo nothing can be more beneficial to Mankind. For of what Profit or Uſe to the World is the great Variety of Rites and Ceremonies which every Nation in it claims? Do they contribute to the Trade of the Country where they are exercis'd, or to the Strength and Defence of it, or are they in any degree honourable, advantageous or pleaſureable to its Inhabitants?

tants? If they are, they ought to be retain'd for the Good of the Public; if not, how ridiculous, nay often how dangerous, is it to keep them up, and let them grow into Cuſtom? What Cruelties do the Kings of *Aſſyria* commit in forcing the Nations which they conquer to worſhip after their Manner? How obſtinate are many of thoſe Nations, in chuſing rather to endure the ſharpeſt Tortures, than to relinquiſh the vain Superſtitions in which they have been educated? With what a lowring evil Eye do the Prieſteſſes of our *Venus* behold thoſe chaſte Men and Women, who will not ſuffer their Minds and Bodies to be debauch'd with the abominable Luſts of *Paphos?* By their libidinous Geſtures, and looſe Invectives, endeavouring to irritate and provoke their luſtfully zealous Votaries againſt them; branding them with the odious Appellations of cold, impotent, or barren; perſecuting them with all manner of Obſcenities; and declaring that they ought by wholeſome Severities, ſuch as Whipping and Hanging, to be forc'd into an Inclination to do Honour and Service

to

to their Goddeſs. On the contrary, the Prieſts who ſerve *Cybele*, *Jove*'s Mother, muſt be qualified for it at the Expence of their Manhood; and when they are carrying that old Goddeſs about the Streets, take an Opportunity to rob all they meet; for when begging is made a Part of Religion, it is reckon'd Profane to refuſe to give.

Now are not all theſe as well great Inconveniences to the Public, as mighty ridiculous in themſelves? How much better would it be for thoſe miſerable People whom the *Aſſyrians* take in War, if they had no ſuch barbarous Cuſtom as burning them upon their Altars? What Cruelty, Rancour, Revenge, and Hardneſs of Heart does this expreſs? Are theſe Qualities agreeable to the Attributes of God? No ſurely. Or is it for the public Emolument that ſuch Tempers and Habits of Mind ſhould be encouraged? No: but the contrary is certain. Do the wanton Rites of *Venus*, practiſed in this City, in any ſenſe promote publick Good? Do they rectify the Mind, or invigorate the Body?

Do

Do they make thoſe that ſtickle for them more Healthy or more Wiſe? or in any particular contribute to their Well-being? No: but are evidently the Occaſion of much Detriment to the Commonwealth in general, as well as very pernicious to private Families. How many Children of both Sexes are initiated into the Myſteries of the Goddeſs by the Examples of their wanton Mothers? How many Wives, under Pretence of Devotion, take their Fill of ſurreptitious Loves, and adulterate their Huſband's Race with a ſpurious Iſſue? Arts and Arms, the Bulwark and Ornament of Cities, are neglected for theſe baſer ſofter Diverſions; and the Women, whom Nature has deſign'd for keeping up our Species, whom ſhe has form'd fair and tempting with a thouſand agreeable Graces, defeat the End of their Inſtitution by being too liberal of their Charms. They pleaſe the Eye, like a Valley of Corn ſmiling with a vernal Bloom: But when we look to ſee a full Harveſt, behold! the Clouds overſhadow it, the Drops fall thick into the Furrows; and inſtead of an impregnating

Shower,

Shower, it overflows with a Deluge of Rain.

But every Nation has its religious Rites, and conſequently its Follies and Inconveniences of ſome Kind or other. For tho' ſome of theſe are indifferent, and innocent enough in themſelves, yet through Abuſe they may become dangerous to a Community. Such I mean as by a too long Continuance are grown into Cuſtom, and from thence eſteemed by the Vulgar as eſſential, important and neceſſary Parts of Religion. If the Decency, or perhaps Grandeur with which Religion ought to be attended, in populous Cities eſpecially, requires a ſufficient Quantity of Pomp and Shew; this ſhould be as changeable as the Faſhions of our Dreſs; that the People might be pleaſed as well with the Variety and Newneſs, as Magnificence of them; and the Magiſtrate have it in his Power, if Reaſons of State ſhould require it, to alter as eaſily as to continue them. How indecent is it to ſee the Prieſts

of *Pan* running naked about the Streets, expoſing themſelves to the Women and Virgins in a Manner too immodeſt even to be thought on? Yet if the State ſhould attempt to aboliſh this vile Ceremony, what a tumultuous Outcry would immediately be raiſed, by the Women eſpecially? who think they ſhall never feel a Mother's Joys, till they have had a Stroke from theſe frantic Geſticulators.

But as theſe were all certainly of human Inſtitution, to ſerve ſome political End, let us aſk our Reaſon whether God ever told it that he expects any thing of that Kind? It tells us he cannot, and that we ſhould think him a very ſtrange God, if we thought he did. Is there any Ceremony equal to thinking juſtly of God? Is there any Rite or Cuſtom, though ever ſo venerable for its Antiquity and Solemnity, ſo neceſſary, ſo truly religious, ſo agreeable to God, as a Series of virtuous Actions? No: It would be the moſt ſtupid Profaneneſs to ſuſpect it.

How

How then came the one to be preferred before the other, or even to take place at all in the Minds of reaſonable Creatures? How came they to imagine, that a Prejudice in Favour of a Parcel of idle Tricks, would atone for the Suſpenſion of their Reaſon and the Intermiſſion of their Virtue? For a bigotted Attention to Toys of this Kind makes us, for a Time, loſe the Aſſiſtance of thoſe two noble Guides. Why, my *Æthalides*, as great a Riddle as this ſeems to be, it is eaſily accounted for: Thoſe who have the Advantage of Reaſon, could never act thus, unleſs that were firſt blinded and perverted. If People, in Purſuance of the Dictates of that excellent Faculty, were to exerciſe themſelves in Habits of Virtue only, and reject theſe ridiculous Fopperies, what Occaſion would there be for Prieſts? Therefore this Set of Men, to prove the Neceſſity and to enhance the Dignity of their Office, pretend that the Gods themſelves have ordained and commanded theſe Things, and appointed them

Adminiſtrators and Executors of their Will. They know that there is a Conſciouſneſs of Duty in every Man's Heart, which tells him that he ought to endeavour after Virtue, and lets him ſee there is a Pleaſure in doing Good; but fills his Mind with Shame and Remorſe upon committing an ill Action, and makes him afraid to neglect doing that which is right. This natural Fear the Arch-Prieſts work upon and improve by their own Impoſtures; and, among the vulgar ordinary People, find it no very difficult Taſk. The Balance of a Man's Reaſon, when he comes deliberately to weigh his own Actions, will incline him to believe, that according as they have tended to Virtue or Vice in this Life, he ſhall meet with Puniſhments or Rewards in the Shades below. And as the Generality of Mankind leans more toward Vice than Virtue, and muſt conſequently be often agitated with this Fear; by this Means there is Room for the deſigning Prieſt to ſtep in and biaſs their Judgment; which is commonly done,

by

by flattering their Hopes, and leſſening their Fears. He comforts and encourages their drooping Spirits, by aſſuring them the Gods may be appeaſed and reconciled by ſomething elſe beſides Virtue: That ſuch a Thing as an Hecatomb of Bullocks may go a great way; that building of a Temple, and dedicating it to ſome particular God, will do well; and that ſettling a good Revenue for the Maintenance of the Prieſts that muſt belong to it, is moſt effectual.

Thus People who are conſcious of having committed Injuries among Men, and ſollicitous how they ſhall eſcape the Laſh of the Furies, are very willing to believe thoſe that find out Expedients for their Security, though ever ſo abſurd and unreaſonable. We have neglected (ſay they) to imitate the Attributes of God, in being Juſt and Good; but will He be pleaſed with Immolations and Victims? Will the Blood of Bulls and Goats and Sheep entertain him ſo much, that he will overlook our Injuſtice for their Sakes, and commute

our

our Puniſhment for the Slaughter of Beaſts? If he will, we are ready to ſatisfy his Demands, even to the one Half of our Eſtates: And how venerable, how ſacred, how uſeful an Order of Men are theſe Prieſts, his Attendants and Interpreters, who tell us theſe good Tidings, and can effect ſuch glorious Things for us!

To think thus, my *Æthalides*, is natural to a Mind diſturbed and perverted by Fear; but Thou ſeeſt how far it is from the Dictates of cool Reaſon; and conſequently how far from being agreeable to the divine Nature. Behold *Pandicæus*, who neither enters our profaned Temples, nor attends at our abominable Rites; how chearful, how calm, how undiſturbed is his Mind? how healthy and vigorous his Body? how unreprovable all his Actions? He walks through the Streets, and, with an unconcerned ſmiling Countenance, ſees the Entrails crackling and frying upon the Altars. He ſalutes the High-Prieſt with a well-bred Civility, and puts on an outward Gravity when he talks with him; but laughs inwardly

wardly at the Farce he is acting, and admires at the Stupidity of Mankind. The Deity, whom they ſo groſly make Court to, as if he had the Appetites and Paſſions of a Mortal, *Pandicæus* contemplates with the Light of his Reaſon, and ſtudies to imitate by the Practice of Juſtice, Benignity, and all kind of ſocial Virtues. His Heart tells him, that this is the Duty of a reaſonable Creature; his conſtant Exerciſe of it has made it habitual; and the uninterrupted Pleaſure which flows from ſuch a Rectitude of Thoughts and Actions, confirms him in his Opinion, that what is thus good and joyful muſt be Godlike.

For, what ill-natured Deities, my *Æthalides*, are the Gods repreſented to be, when we are told that we cannot pleaſe them unleſs we torment ourſelves? Juſtice and Temperance, Honeſty and Sobriety, Complaiſance and Good-Will, are exceeding pleaſant and delightful, as well as uſeful and advantageous to that Society in which they are practiſed: But Fear, Superſtition, Moroſeneſs, Paſſion, Suſpicion, Jealouſy

and

and Vain-Glory, which are the Ingredients of moſt People's Religion, are tormenting to ones ſelf, and troubleſome to others. Which of theſe Qualities is moſt likely to pleaſe God, the good-natured or the ill-natured? It needs no Anſwer.

Thus, from time to time, did this wiſe judicious Man ſow the Seeds of Knowledge in my Heart, and inoculate the Buds of Virtue in my Mind. I had a Memory which happily retained the Things committed to it; and though the Food with which I was ſupplied, might well be thought too ſtrong for one of ſuch tender Years, yet I had an Underſtanding that could digeſt it, and turn it into the moſt wholſome Nouriſhment. I was ſcarce arrived to the twelfth Year of my Age, when I was admired and careſſed by all that ſaw me: By the graver Sort for my Learning and Knowledge; by the Young, the Spritely and the Gay, for my Wit and Beauty. As much as I was ſeaſoned and fortified againſt the Attacks of Vanity, from the wiſe Inſtructions of my Maſter,

I could

I could not, without being touched with a ſecret Pleaſure, perceive the Eyes of the admiring City turned upon me as I paſſed along. They courted me into their Houſes with Importunity; and there was a viſible Emulation among them about gaining my Eſteem by the Delicacy of their Entertainments.

But in all theſe, there was none whoſe Fondneſs was expreſſed with ſo much Ardor, and even Impetuoſity, as that of *Iphigenia*, a Matron of the firſt Rank; and who ſurpaſſed the reſt of my Admirers in Munificence, as much as in the Exceſs of her Love, and the Superiority of her Condition. She bound a Bracelet of Pearl many times round my left Arm, and faſtened on Gems of great Price for the Buttons of my Sandals. She retained me with the tendereſt Blandiſhments; and the ſenſible Tokens ſhe continually gave of the Reality of her Kindneſs, diſpoſed me to return the Affection, by devoting to her Service thoſe Intermiſſions of Leiſure, which are ſuch neceſſary Reliefs to Study. Yet I

could not diſcover which was moſt the Object of her Paſſion, the Turn of my Mind or Body; ſhe ſeemed to be in Raptures upon the Contemplation of either of them; but when I was ſpeaking in the moſt engaging Manner, would frequently break her Attention to my Diſcourſe by reiterated Kiſſes, and convulſive Embraces. She obtained leave of my Mother, that I ſhould ſtay whole Nights in her Houſe; and *Melidora*, from a Senſe of the Obligations laid on her by ſo noble a Lady, contented her ſelf ſometimes a Week together without ſeeing me.

To the Breaſt of *Eleutherius* I committed all my Secrets. He was become rather a Friend than a Maſter, and was as ſincere in aſſiſting me with his Counſel now, as before he had been diligent in furniſhing me with his Inſtructions. To him I communicated every new Motion in this amicable Affair, and model'd my Behaviour according to his Opinion. He conſidered that *Iphigenia* was paſt that Age in which the Levities and Sallies of Youth plead

Excuſe

Excuſe for unruly Paſſions, and the Conſequences which they produce: That tho' her Huſband had long ſince been indifferent to her, ſhe avoided giving him any deſigned Offence; as knowing that notwithſtanding her Charms were not capable of affecting him now, he would have raged with Jealouſy at the Thoughts of another's poſſeſſing them. But *Eleutherius* perceived that her Fondneſs for me was ſo far from alarming him, that he had rather encouraged and given in to it; and from thence concluded, that, thinking his Honour ſafe, he did not intend to deprive his Wife of ſo innocent a Pleaſure as ſhe ſeemed to enjoy in a Boy's Company. He thought too, that *Iphigenia* would compound by ſuch an Indulgence for all the ſevere Reſtraints her Affectations of Virtue had impoſed upon her; and that all the little Efforts of Deſire, which for a long time ſhe had checked and concealed, would break out with united Forces, and center in her Paſſion for me.

From theſe Obſervations he formed a moſt artful Scheme for my future Conduct; in which it was contrived how I might converſe with *Iphigenia*, without diminiſhing her Love and the Advantages flowing from it, the good Opinion of her Huſband, or my own Integrity. She was wealthy beyond Account, and moſt of her Riches being ſuperadded to her Dowry by the Death of great Relations, remained in her own Diſpoſal. She gave me every Day freſh Teſtimonies of her Affection, by repeated Inſtances of her Liberality. I was diſtinguiſhed in my Apparel as if I had been her own Son, and ſhe often carried me with her to the Temples, and among the Aſſemblies of honourable Women; where I encountered ſuch a Variety of odd Adventures, as gave Occaſion to many entertaining and inſtructive Diſcourſes of *Eleutherius*. Religion, Gallantry, Politics, and Trade, were the Topics I was required to be moſt obſervant upon: Theſe were the Supplies by which our private Diſcourſes were from time to time kept up; which, by occaſional

ſional Excurſions I took care to provide for the Repaſt of my retired Preceptor, whoſe Age and Station hindered him from mingling in the Chace, and being a preſent Spectator of the Sport. Various were the Mazes I trod in tracing the different Intrigues of Lovers, Stateſmen, Prieſts and Artificers. Affectations, Impoſtures, and pernicious Deſigns of what Kind ſoever were the Marks I aimed at; and my Haunts were contrived to be in thoſe Places where theſe were moſt likely to be found. *Of which an Account will be given in this Hiſtory in Order as they happened.*

F I N I S.

JU 66